

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

Nothing is more important for student learning than the quality of the classroom teacher. A new teacher professional development and induction program that focuses on new-teacher support and classroom practice, while sustaining the idealism of beginning teachers, offers great hope for our schools. (Haycock, 1998). To that end, this large urban district has broken loose of the traditions and has built a comprehensive model of staff development that eases the way for new teachers. First year teaching is a difficult challenge today. The first month of school is overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a lot at a rapid pace. Beginning teachers are bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated. During the survival phase, most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water (Moir, 1999).

“September Survival” is a program that introduces new teachers to the culture, expectations and vision of this large urban district and its schools. “September Survival” begins with a three-day introductory orientation program held in August that kicks off the school year. Each day of the orientation has a theme relevant to new teachers’ needs. The district designed this program to model effective lesson design, classroom procedures, positive attitudes, high expectations, and effective use of time to maximize student learning. The district wants novice teachers to experience how it feels to be part of a well-run district encompassing 40 schools. This program doesn’t end in August. The broad orientation continues with a series of “September Survival” workshops held everyday after school during the month of September, beginning on the first day of school...even on Fridays! These informational and networking sessions are held from 3:30-4:30 pm and comprise a program of wide-ranging topics based in the tenets of effective educational practices and instructional strategies. Every new teacher is invited to participate voluntarily and the “September Survival” professional development opportunities are absolutely FREE! This year, more than 450 new teachers were hired and participated in the August orientation institute. As a follow up, more than 280 of those individuals signed up for and attended more than 1100 “September Survival” sessions! Topics include: “What you Need to Succeed on the First Days of School”, “Organizing and Managing an Effective Classroom”, “Effective Classroom Rules, Rewards and Options”, “Working with My Mentor”, “Communicating with the Principal and Other Teachers”, “Creating a Classroom Library”, “Inclusive Classroom Strategies”, “Introduction to the ESPA, GEPA and HSPA”, “Understanding the District’s ‘Teacher Evaluation Framework’” and “Evaluating Student Work” The brochure encourages participants to come!...Connect!...Collaborate!...Coffee!...Cookies!”.

The **objectives**, encompassing the school and district level, are:

1. To provide comprehensive professional development opportunities and support for new teachers before, during, and throughout the first year of teaching;
2. To promote collaboration, problem-solving, consensus building, and higher level teaching skills amongst new teachers;
3. To develop and advance characteristics associated with "quality producers" including strong speaking and presentation skills so that education will be successfully facilitated for students on a daily basis:

This program is innovative and promotes high student achievement because “September Survival” a systematic process for the dissemination and application of new ideas and techniques, staff training and human development. It is viewed as a necessary process for the cultivation of precious human resources, and as a symbiotic process of individual and organizational growth. “September Survival” lasts far beyond September...it continues to support novice educators so that they not only survive...but thrive!!! It is a comprehensive, highly structured process of integrated events, rather than a series of disjointed workshops,

lectures, or consultations. "September Survival" has an instructional focus and centers around the concepts of improved academic learning and effective schools. The mechanism for the systematic transmission of knowledge and ideas consists of an in-service component and a continuing education component. Within each component, a variety of delivery systems are used, including workshops, seminars and meetings; written publications, outside consultants, professional visitations/conferences, formal courses, on-the job training, study groups, partnerships, training, mentoring, peer coaching and turn-key training. Activities may be conducted during the day, evening, or on weekends during the school year, as well as during the summer months, for all new teachers.

The mission of the program is that all educators in the district must be dedicated to a continuous plan of professional development that begins with their hiring in the district, continues with their induction into the profession, and that extends through the life of their professional career in education in the district through ongoing and sustained professional development endeavors. The district further believes that effective educators are life-long learners, that professional development must be an ongoing process of refining skills, inquiring into practice, and developing new methods...this all begins with a newly hired individual's experience of participating in "September Survival"!

"September Survival focuses on teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and teacher longevity as well as supporting school reform in this district --- one classroom at a time, one teacher at a time. The program's ultimate goal is to foster the ongoing professional development of newly hired instructional staff members through broadening an individual's repertoire of professional skills and knowledge so that the teacher can increase the passion for learning and knowledge of all students at a sophisticated level.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

This program embraces, reflects and is consistent with New Jersey's twelve Professional Development Standards that represent the State's vision for professional development. This program engages each educator in a collegial and collaborative dialogue with other educators and education partners to broaden the knowledge and expertise needed to guide students toward the successful attainment and mastery of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards.

ALL NJCCCS are addresses throughout each phase of this program. In the first phase, the Summer Orientation Program, participants are addressed by host principals and supervisors, the Superintendent, Associate Superintendents and other key personnel. Additionally, workshops are conducted by district supervisors in each content area of the NJCCCS to introduce new teachers to the Standards, the indicators and how to plan instruction for students. Timelines and flowcharts as well as goal setting are stressed in these sessions. During the second phase, the "September Survival Workshops", the participants are involved in active learning situations and discussions that revolve around best instructional practices, innovative programs and techniques, etc. all in direct relation to the Standards.

Ongoingly, participants are addressed by district resource people as well as university and college personnel. The topics developed are curriculum and instruction in the areas of the Standards, Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Health and Physical Education and World Languages; planning; analysis of the

evaluative domains and assisting new teachers; NJCCCS and CCWRS and district strategies for implementation; utilizing test scores and other data to develop a teacher's instructional program more fully; leadership styles; strategies and tactics; creating an environment for learning; and setting student goals and objectives.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

Current research clearly links student achievement with teacher quality. Among the key factors with low student performance are inadequate practical training and daily support for new teachers. The lack of gradual, guided induction into teaching and the isolation that many beginning teachers experience cause them to develop undesirable coping mechanisms. Support is essential to retaining new teachers, but the ultimate goal of beginning-teacher induction must be the development of professionals who can help complex learning happen for students. "September Survival" provides systematic support for beginning teachers by providing assistance, formally and informally, in the areas of planning and preparation, curriculum, effective instruction, assessment, students and learning, classroom organization and management, infusion of technology, and interpersonal communication as they relate to student success.

Assessment measures used to evaluate the "September Survival Program", to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met, are multi-faceted and ongoing throughout the cycle of instruction and throughout the school year and summer.

Because a teacher touches many students during a 30- year career, the teacher's success in the classroom is vital to student success. Each teacher will affect hundreds, if not thousands, of students during that time, influencing their academic achievement, their joy of learning, and their sense of belonging. Giving our beginning teachers the best possible introduction to their careers and providing the support and resources necessary for their growth, regardless of their length of service with the district, could only benefit our students and district.

As part of the process, each newly hired instructional staff member completes a "Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Beginning Teachers". The survey lists 25 items that describes areas of possible need. There is a scale rating score for analysis. Based on the results of this needs assessment and other survey data collected, professional development opportunities are developed and designed accordingly. There is usually "Moderate Need" or "High Need" for all individuals in all 25 areas of the survey.

Accordingly, the success of the September Survival Workshops is evaluated by the numbers of voluntary participants as well as their evaluation form comments. This year, a sampling of the number of participants in various sessions are as follows: "What you Need to Succeed on the First Days of School" – 69 participants (held on the first day of school); "Organizing and Managing an Effective Classroom" – 73 participants (arranges in smaller groups); "Effective Classroom Rules, Rewards and Options" – 56 participants; "Working with My Mentor – 58 participants; "Communicating with the Principal and Other Teachers" – 49 participants; "Creating a Classroom Library" – 41 participants (broken down by k-2, 3-5. and 6-8 groupings); "Inclusive Classroom Strategies" – 75 participants; "Introduction to the ESPA, GEPA and HSPA" – 55 participants; "Understanding the District's 'Teacher Evaluation Framework'" – 41 participants; and "Evaluating Student Work" – 57 participants. All participants were newly hired

for the 2001-2002 schools year.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

Where are tomorrow's veteran teachers? They are this year's newly hired teachers! This program gives teachers a strong foundation of classroom competence on which to build their professional lives and careers in our district. The district is making every effort to identify and develop these human resources by assisting them in becoming the future instructional leaders in our schools. It is possible for any district, no matter the size, to implement a similar program. This program can be easily replicated by adapting the format and layout to the needs of each individual school or district and providing appropriate staff development to make it an effective teaching and learning tool. There is some cost involved but each district could design a valuable program based on their financial and human resources. Extensive documentation is available for distribution to other district interested in initiating a similar program.